

Introduction

All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner that encourages open and free competition. Procurement procedures cannot restrict or eliminate competition. Examples of restrictive practices are placing unreasonable requirements on potential bidders in order to disqualify them or unnecessary experience and bonding requirements.

All potential bidders must receive the same information regarding bids. If the sponsor answers any questions orally or in writing to one bidder, that information must also be sent to all other potential bidders.

Sponsors must ensure that there are no conflicts of interest, real or apparent that may arise due to prior or future associations, financial or other interests, between employees or board members involved in the award and/or administration and the firm selected for an award. Sponsors must also ensure that its officers, employees or agents do not take any action that may influence the bid.

Preparing the Invitation for Bid (IFB)

Step 1) complete page 1 and #1 on page 2. If you will not be using the sample menu on page 5, attach the menu that you are requesting that the vendor bid on. Make sure that the menu meets CACFP meal pattern requirements on page 4. Do **not** sign page 3.

Steps 2) identify vendors who may be interested in bidding. All efforts must be taken to obtain a minimum of three bids. Identify potential vendors by contacting non-profit organizations like local schools, hospitals or other sponsors and for profit sponsors found in the phone book under caterers or restaurants

Step 3) prepare and submit a bid advertisement to the newspaper. The ad must appear in the paper at least 14 days (30 days is recommended) before the bid opening. It must include: the name, address and phone number of the organization, how to obtain the IFB, a brief and general description of the contract, the deadline for receipt of bids, and the date, time and place of the public bid opening. The following is an example of an advertisement:

“Sealed bids will be received at the **(name of Organization)** office at **(address)** until noon on **(date)** for meal catering service at **(name one center address or state the geographic serving area)**. Specifications for ____ **(number)** breakfasts, ____ lunches and ____ snacks may only be obtained by contacting **(name of contact person)** at the **(name of Organization)**, **(state business hours and telephone number)**. All work will be conducted in strict accordance with bid specifications. Bids will be opened and read on **(date and time)**”

Steps 4) send the invitation for bid to other interested parties you have identified in Step 2

Sealed Bid and Bid Selection

Step 5) Sealed bids that have been delivered no later than the exact time and date indicated on the IFB must be opened publicly at the time and place stated. If there are bidders present, read each bid aloud. Remind the bidders that your organization cannot agree to accept any bid or sign any contract until CACFP approval is received.

Step 6) Review the bids and select the lowest bidder. If you determine that the lowest bidder did not meet the bid or contract requirements, select the next lowest bidder.

VIII. Submission of IFB to CACFP and CACFP Review

At least fifteen days before the contract is scheduled to go into effect, send CACFP the following:

- a) the advertisement used to publicize the procurement.
- b) a copy of all submitted bids, indicating the selected vendor. If the selected vendor is not the lowest bidder, send an explanation for choosing the next lowest bidder.
- c) A list of all the vendors who were sent the IFB and contract
- d) The names of individuals evaluating the bids
- e) Health department permit of selected vendor
- f) Any other information necessary to explain or justify any procurement practices or the selection process